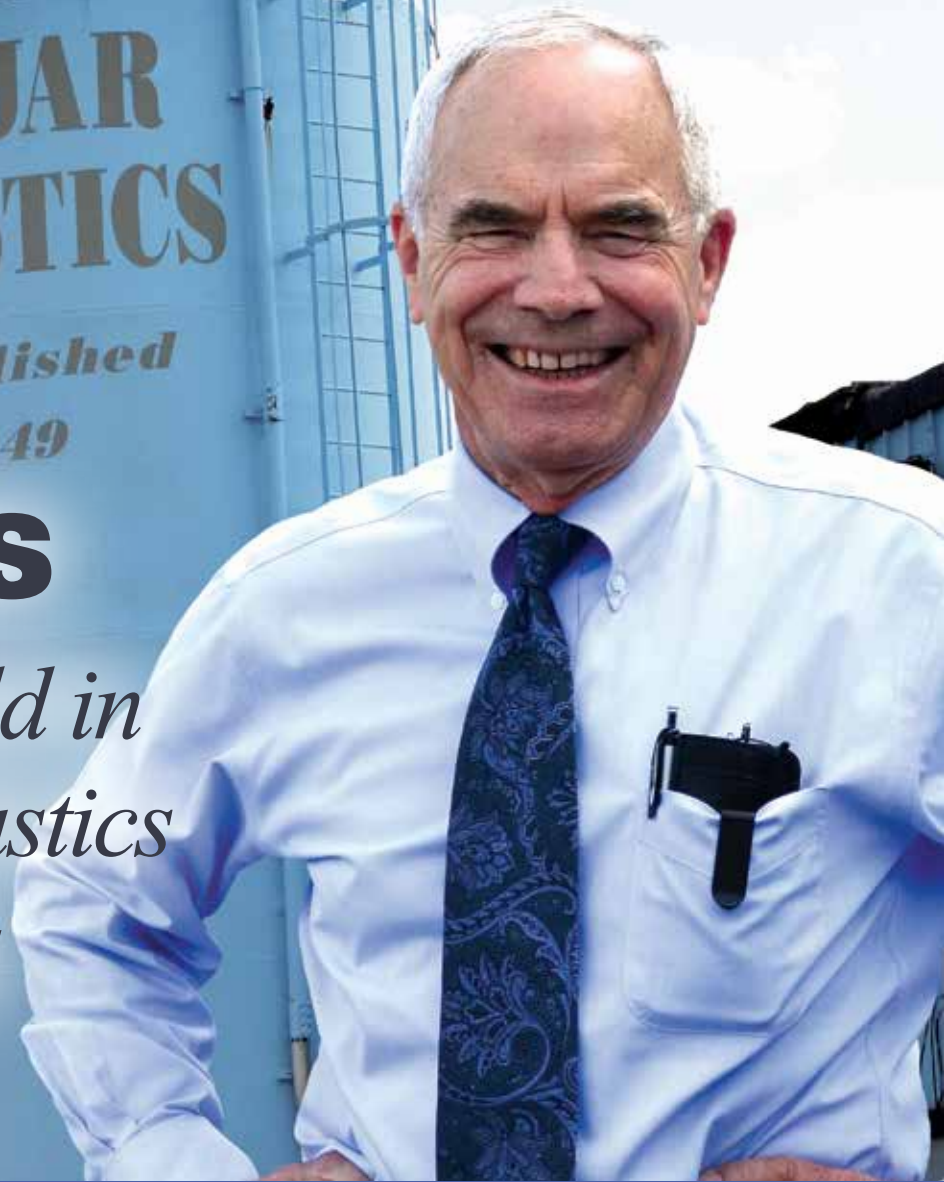


Fall 2017

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## Sajar Plastics

*Breaks the Mold in  
Specialized Plastics  
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# SAJAR PLASTICS

## BREAKS THE MOLD IN SPECIALIZED PLASTICS MANUFACTURING

Middlefield's injection molding pioneer  
joins the Universal Plastics family

BY CHRIS TAYLOR

In the heart of Middlefield, where rolling farmland gives way to modern industry, sits Sajar Plastics' sprawling production facility. Founded in 1949, the manufacturer specializes in gas-assist injection molding of plastic parts. Sajar derived its name from an acronym representing the last names of its founders. Considered a pioneer in the gas-assist injection molding industry—technology that Sajar founders helped develop—the company employs more than 100 people in its 150,000-square-foot facility and has estimated sales of \$16 million.

Gas-assist injection molding is a process used to manufacture large plastic parts with complex designs and high-quality surface finishes. It is ideal for producing large handles, equipment covers, doors, bezels, cabinets, and skins. End markets include medical, laboratory and diagnostic, business, and retail registers/dispensing machines. Sajar offers multiple gas-assist technologies, including traditional internal gas assist and external, gas-counterpressure processes.





**“OUR NO. 1 GOAL IS TO GET MORE WORK INTO THE MIDDLEFIELD FACILITY.”**

– Jay Kumar, CEO and Owner, Universal Plastics

technology is used to make large pieces such as aerospace parts and automotive bumpers. The next year, the Kumars acquired Mayfield Plastics in Sutton, Mass. Both Universal and Mayfield focus on the design and low-volume production of large parts. End products include covers and panels for medical equipment, such as X-ray and CT scanning machines. From kayaks to alpine sleds to plastic-clamshell food packaging, the sister companies produce a slew of products for

a variety of industries. Together, Universal and Mayfield represent one of the largest precision thermoformers in the United States.

“Our goal was to grow the plastics platform and buy more good businesses that fit the culture,” says Kumar.

Kumar credits Geauga County administrators with helping Universal Plastics throughout the Sajar acquisition process. “Everyone has been extremely helpful,” he says. “Ohio has a reputation for being a very pro-business state, and I’m already beginning to see that.”

The parts Sajar Plastics manufactures are similar to those Universal Plastics makes. In fact, the companies have an overlapping customer base, yet they do not compete with each other. When considering the Sajar purchase, Kumar and his team had a vision of serving customers who started with custom thermoforming and eventually progressed to injection molding. In addition to gas-assist injection molding, Sajar offers customers high-pressure structural molding, straight injection molding, engineering services, and secondary operations that include finishing (paint, labeling, and printing), assembly, and packaging. A broad choice of manufacturing capabilities means customers can find solutions within the Universal family of companies.

Because of Sajar Plastics’ ongoing success, Universal management did not make changes regarding employees, facilities and procedures. Larry Nowak, president and CEO of Sajar Plastics, continues to head the Middlefield facility.

In June 2017, the company was sold to Universal Plastics Corp., a heavy-gauge thermoformer based in Holyoke, Mass. For more than 50 years, Universal has been a leader in manufacturing parts for the aerospace, medical device, transportation, consumer products, food packaging, and electronics industries. Jay Kumar, president and CEO of Universal Plastics and Mayfield Plastics Inc., explains the philosophy behind the recent Sajar acquisition.

“We are very pro-American manufacturing,” he says. “We want to see more work coming back to America. In that regard, we were always looking for an injection molder. When we looked at Sajar, we knew it was by far the best we had ever seen. It had a strong Midwestern work ethic and engineering department, and a culture of people working together.”

Before he was a plastics industry entrepreneur, Kumar was a Wall Street trader. After 10 years at J.P. Morgan Chase, he and his father, Sunil Kumar, decided to team up and take on small-business ownership. The elder Kumar had worked in the manufacturing sector for more than four decades. After selling the company he was working for, he was ready for a new venture.

“My father ran a chemical company, which he sold to Ashland,” says Jay Kumar. “We are very bullish on American manufacturing. We thought it would be a good idea to buy a small manufacturing company and see what we could do with it.”

The father-son team purchased Universal Plastics in 2012. The company specializes in thermoforming, a process in which a sheet of plastic is heated and placed over a mold. When the sheet cools, it hardens and forms a part. The

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## THE PROCESS

Gas-assist injection molding technology was developed in the 1980s by three companies, Sajar being one of them. During the process, plastic pellets are heated and melted. The melted resin is then injected into a steel mold. Because the liquid plastic is injected at high pressures, it is able to reach all areas of the mold. Small channels within the mold are filled with pressurized nitrogen gas, allowing the resin



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to flow throughout the mold. Once the resin is cooled, the part is removed from the mold. Gas-assist molding enables the production of complex, large parts with stringent cosmetic requirements. It requires less resin than traditional injection molding processes, which translates into material reduction and cost savings.

“Sajar is probably the best in the nation—maybe the world—in the gas-assist injection molding industry,” says Kumar. “Our employees are really good at what they do and at pushing the envelope of this technology.”

Though known for medium- to large-part manufacturing, Sajar has the capabilities to produce almost any size part so customers can streamline their processes and consolidate supply bases. The injection molder can produce plastic parts up to 80 inches long and 70 inches wide with surface areas of 1,000 square inches. One medical-device manufacturer hired Sajar to design and fabricate a custom medical equipment cover, converting their previous product from a thermoform process. Other applications include the production of custom, computer-server doors and medical equipment trays. Previously, the trays were manufactured using a structural foam process. Converting the process to gas-assist injection molding allowed the customer to increase production quantities and reduce the weight of the finished product.

## LOOKING AHEAD

Though it has been less than three months since the acquisition, adding the Middlefield-based manufacturer to the Universal Plastics family is proving beneficial to customers, employees and investors.

“It was a good fit,” says Kumar. “I’m very happy with the purchase. It has only been a few months, but we have had no negative surprises. I really enjoy the people who are there. They work very hard, are intellectually honest, and I like their spirit and work ethic.”

When asked if he has plans to grow Sajar’s business, Kumar says, “Absolutely. We plan on expanding through acquisitions—the Midwest is ideal for that. And, we

plan to expand the Middlefield site. Our No. 1 goal is to get more work into the Middlefield facility. We want to add more thermoforming and molding equipment there.

“I am very excited and feel honored that I was able to purchase Sajar. I love the people there and the work that they do. I think the customers appreciate what Sajar Plastics has to offer.”

With an eye on customer success, Sajar will continue to grow its business. Stay tuned for more from the plastics pioneer of Geauga County. For more information on manufacturing solutions from Sajar Plastics, please contact the company at 440.632.5203 or [info@sajar.com](mailto:info@sajar.com), or visit their website at [www.sajarplastics.com](http://www.sajarplastics.com). 